

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAHA 00054 310942Z

17-12

ACTION EA-14

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P 310845Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL NAHA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1293

AMEMB TOKYO

INFOR USFJ FUCHU JAPAN

CINCPAC/POLAD HAWAII

USARBCO FORT BUCKNER

313TH AD KADENA

MARCORB CAMP BUTLER

3D MARDIV CAMP COURTNEY

COMFLEACTS OKINAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 054

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MARR, PINT, JA

SUBJ: OKINAWAN INITIAL REACTION TO BASE RELEASES

SUMMARY: INITIAL OKINAWAN REACTION TO RELEASE MAJOR PACKAGE OF U.S. FORCES BASE PROPERTIES IS A MIXTURE OF SATISFACTION AND LEFTIST CARPING. THE AREAS TO BE RELEASED, HOWEVER, INCLUDE THOSE UNDER THE MOST INTENSE LOCAL PRESSURE FOR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH CARRIED AS THE MAJOR STORY OF THE DAY, THE TWO LEFTIST OKINAWAN NEWSPAPERS PREDICTABLY PUT AS NETATIVE A SLANT AS

PAGE 2 RUAOBQA5028 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 054

POSSIBLE ON OUR RELEASE OF BASE FACILITIES ANNOUNCED BY THE SECURITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE JAN 30. AMONG THE POINTS HARPED ON WERE THAT THIS MEANT A STRENGTHENING OF THE CORE BASES; THAT ACTUAL RETURN OF THE MILITARY PORT, ETC., WOULD STILL TAKE A LONG TIME;
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NAHA 00054 310942Z

AND THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES WOULD COST JAPAN

INTENSE SUMS OF MONEY. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE (YARA IS AWAY IN YAEYAMA) IS QUOTED AS SAYING THE RELEASES WERE BELOW THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE OKINAWAN PEOPLE AND THE PREFECTURE WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR TOTAL RETURN.

2. DESPITE THIS, THE TOTAL IMPRESSION FROM THE ARTICLES AND THE LISTS OF FACILITIES INVOLVED IS OF A SUBSTANTIAL RELEASE. ALSO, THE STEADY SERIES OF PRESS STORIES BASED ON SPECULATION AND ON LEAKS OVER THE PAST WEEKS ANTICIPATING THE RELEASES HAS, ON BALANCE, BEEN HELPFUL TO OUR INTERESTS LOCALLY. THE STORIES FOCUSED ATTENTION ON THE EXTENT OF THE PACKAGE AND SEVERELY UNDERCUT ZENGUNRO'S CONTENTION THAT THE HEAVY RIF'S ANNOUNCED JAN 2 WERE NOT BEING ACCOMPANIED BY ACTUAL REDUCTIONS IN BASES. THE UNION HAS THUS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY HANDICAPPED IN TRYING TO BUILD UP PUBLIC SUPPORT AND A BELLIGERENT MOOD AMONG ITS MEMBERS.

3. OUR PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS WITH THE CONCERNED REFORMIST MAYORS INDICATE THAT, CONTRARY TO THE PRESS, THEY ARE PLEASED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT. WHILE REPEATING THE STANDARD WISH FOR THE TOTAL RETURN OF FUTENMA USMC AIR BASE, THE GINOWAN MAYOR EXPRESSED TO US

PAGE 3 RUAOBQA5028 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 054

GRATIFICATION AT THE EXTENT OF RELEASES IN HIS CITY. ALTHOUGH URASOE RECEIVED COMPARABLY LITTLE, THE REFORMIST MAYOR THERE EXPRESSED NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT U.S. ARMY MACHINATO SERVICE AREA CONTINUING VIRTUALLY INTACT. COMPLAINING THAT NAHA WAS ALWAYS DUMPING ITS PROBLEMS ON URASOE, HE DID, HOWEVER, EXPRESS INTENSE OPPOSITION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THE MILITARY PORT BEING MOVED FROM NAHA TO HIS CITY'S WATERFRONT. MAYOR TAIRA OF NAHA WAS PLEASED AT THE PROSPECTS FOR GETTING MACHINATO HOUSING AREA BACK BUT WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FINDING ANY ALTERNATIVE AREA ON OKINAWA FOR A NEW MILITARY PORT WHICH WOULD NOT DRAW INTENSE OPPOSITION FROM BOTH EXTREMISTS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. WE WERE UNABLE TO SOUND OUT THE MAYORS OF CHATAN-SON (DUE-SUKIRAN), OR KADENA-SON, WHO ARE BOTH IN TOKYO.

4. COMMENT: ON BALANCE THE REACTION TO OUR RELEASES IS AS GOOD AS CAN BE EXPECTED ON THIS LEFTIST DOMINATED ISLAND. MOST OF THE LEADERSHIP AND PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND THAT THE U.S. FORCES ARE TRYING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE NOT TO STAND IN THE WAY OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. THE RELEASES ARE GENERALLY IN THE AREAS UNDER THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NAHA 00054 310942Z

INTENSE LOCAL POLITICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL PRESSURE, AND WILL GIVE US SOME CUSHION FOR A WHILE. BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEM OF SURVEYING FOR OWNERSHIP, IN MOST CASES IT WILL BE OVER A YEAR AFTER RELEASE

PAGE 4 RUAOBQA5028 C O N F I D E N T I A L NAHA 054

BEFORE THE LAND CAN ACTUALLY BE PUT TO CIVIL USE. THEREFORE

ANYTHING U.S. FORCES CAN DO TO CHANGE THE APPEARANCE OF OUR OWNER-SHIP (REMOVAL OF SIGNS, MOVING FENCES, ETC). WILL BE VERY HELPFUL IN REDUCING THE NOW HEAVY VISIBILITY OF OUR FACILITIES. ON THE MOVING OF NAHA PORT AND PERHAPS SOME OTHER FACILITIES, WE CAN EXPECT SIGNIFICANT LOCAL OBSTRUCTION, BUT FORTUNATELY THIS WILL BE IN MOST PART A PROBLEM FOR THE GOJ TO HANDLE.

SYLVESTER

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